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ABSTRACT

The effect of teacher reputation on student satisfaction and learning was investigated using the "educational seduction" paradigm. "Educational seduction" describes the actions of an entertaining teacher who "seduces" students into believing that they are receiving quality instruction in the absence of adequate lecture content. The subjects were 198 introductory psychology students at the University of Manitoba. Students viewed one of four video-taped lectures: (1) a high teaching style instructor giving a high content lecture; (2) a high teaching style instructor giving a low content lecture; (3) a low teaching style instructor giving a high content lecture; or (4) a low teaching style instructor giving a low content lecture. Before viewing the tape, half of the students received a positive description of the instructor's teaching reputation and half received a negative description. Following viewing of the lectures, students completed a teacher evaluation and a multiple-choice test on the lecture content. Results showed that teacher evaluations were biased in the direction of the prior information, but that student achievement was not affected. Educational seduction occurred in both positive and negative reputation conditions. (MM)

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Educational Seduction: The Effect of Teacher Reputation on Student Satisfaction and Learning.

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SESSION 27.13

(A) PERSPECTIVES

Periodically an "undesirable" by-product of instruction involves those teachers who receive favorable student evaluations, but who convey very little knowledge or understanding. Educational seduction is frequently associated with the "entertaining" teacher who has a charismatic personality, and who "seduces" students into believing that they are receiving quality instruction in the absence of adequate lecture content. Naftulin, Ware, and Donnelly (1973) trained a Hollywood actor to present an entertaining lecture about which he knew nothing, to a group of professional educators. An evaluation indicated that the educators expressed satisfaction with the learning experience. In short, a lecture utilizing the "entertainment" component of teaching style, in the absence of adequate lecture content, can be positively evaluated even by an audience that is highly cognizant of teaching effects.

A basic laboratory analogue for studying educational seduction includes the teaching style and lecture content variables, and a measure of student satisfaction, using a Teacher Rating Form (TRF), and student achievement (ACH). Both style and content have at least two levels, yielding a 2x2 factorial design with two dependent measures. Educational seduction is defined a priori as the lack of significant lecture content effect on student evaluations under high style conditions, coupled with a significant content effect on student ACH under the same high style conditions. Thus, the phenomenon is represented by a planned comparison between the high style/low content (HS/LC) and high style/high content (HS/HC) conditions, where significant differences exist for student ACH in the absence of TRF differences. Using this paradigm, Ware and Williams (1975) provided strong empirical support for the phenomenon, and also showed student incentive modifies its impact (Williams & Ware, 1976a). More recently, Williams and Ware (1976b) demonstrated that, under certain experimental conditions, the effect maintains with repeated exposure, while Perry, Abrami, and Leventhal (1976) showed the effect can be eliminated in other situations.

A significant factor influencing teaching effectiveness is information about the teacher's reputation that a student brings to a new course. Regardless of whether or not teaching style per se is good or bad, evaluations can be significantly modified by the predispositions that a student has about the instructor. Both McClelland (1970) and Perry, Niemi, and Jones (1974) found that prior expectations about an instructor's teaching style significantly biased later evaluations in the direction of those expectations. Unfortunately, style was not manipulated in these studies, nor was a measure of student achievement taken.

The present experiment investigated the effect of teacher reputation (positive/negative) on student TRF ratings and ACH performance using the educational seduction analogue. This manipulation represents an improvement in generalizability over previous educational seduction research, since many students have expectations about their teacher's reputation prior to coming to class (Leventhal, Abrami, Perry, & Breen, 1975). It was hypothesized that, if educational seduction

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is a robust pehnomenon, it would occur in both positive and negative teacher reputation conditions, and that the TRF ratings would be biased in the direction of the prior expectations.

(B) METHOD AND DATA SOURCE

The subjects were 198 male and female Introductory Psychology students at the University of Manitoba who were obtaining experimental credits. Each student was randomly assigned to one of the eight experimental groups.

The materials included a videotape recording system for presenting the lectures and two pa[illegible]and-pencil questionnaires. The lecture tapes consisted of an instructor r[illegible]aying specified teaching characteristics that have previously been identi[illegible] with "high" and "low" teaching style by Williams and Ware (1976a, b) and Perry, [illegible]orami, and Leventhal (1976). The exact procedures for constructing high and low teaching style presentations are outlined in detail in these sources. Thus, two low and two high style tapes were constructed, each style having a low and an high lecture content version. The four tapes were pilot-tested by presenting them to 109 judges (n = 27, 24, 30, 28) who evaluated teaching style on the following dimensions: enthusiasm, humor, friendliness, physical movement, vocal inflection, personality style, warmth, intelligence, pragmatic character, dynamic character. Multiple t comparisons between the low and high teaching style conditions were significantly different for all ten dimensions ($p < .001$), with high style being evaluated consistently more favorably.

Students were told that the experiment is concerned with the evaluation of teaching, and that they will be viewing a videotaped lecture that was presented during a regular class session. Before the lecture began the students received a short description of the instructor summarizing biographic information and including an evaluation of his teaching made by previous students. In each of the four lecture conditions, one half of the students received a description having a positive evaluation, and one half received a negative evaluation. Following the lecture presentation students were asked to evaluate it and to write a 30-item multiple-choice examination.

The positive and negative teaching evaluations will be selected using procedures outlined by Perry, Niemi, and Jones (1974). Evaluations were taken from the 1971-1972 UMSU anticalendar which is made available to students at the beginning of the academic year. Eight positive and eight negative evaluations were selected from one discipline, psychology, and modified such that an alphabetical letter replaced the professor's actual name. The 16 evaluations were combined into a booklet and each was followed by a 9-point rating scale, ranging from extremely negative (-4) to extremely positive (+4). These booklets were administered to a group of 50 judges who rated each evaluation on the scale provided. The most extreme positive and extreme negative evaluations were selected for inclusion in the personal description of the lecturer. The summary included biographical information such as occupation and education, and this was followed by either the positive or the negative teaching evaluation.

(C) RESULTS

The mean TRF ratings and ACH scores for the eight experimental conditions are presented in Table 1. An analysis of the educational seduction hypothesis showed that in the positive teacher reputation conditions students' TRF ratings of HS/LC

and HS/HC were insignificant, $t(46) < 1$, $p > .05$, although student ACH scores were significantly higher in the HS/HC condition, $t(46) = 4.66$, $p < .001$. In the negative reputation conditions TRF ratings were not significantly different between the HS/LC and HS/HC conditions, $t(44) = 1.13$, $p > .05$, but student ACH scores were significantly higher in the HS/HC condition, $t(44) = 5.87$, $p < .001$. A comparison of the teacher reputation conditions showed that the TRF ratings were significantly higher for the positive HS/LC group, $t(49) = 5.06$, $p < .001$, and for the HS/HC group, $t(41) = 2.94$, $p < .001$.

It is interesting to note that the pattern in the low style groups was somewhat different. In the positive reputation condition TRF ratings between low content and high content differed significantly, $t(50) = 4.08$, $p < .001$, as did ACH scores, $t(50) = 3.73$, $p < .001$. A similar pattern was evident in the negative reputation conditions in which TRF ratings, $t(50) = 4.78$, $p < .001$, and ACH scores, $t(50) = 4.54$, $p < .001$, differed significantly between the low and high content conditions. For both the positive and negative reputation conditions students who were presented with low teaching style evaluated a high content lecture significantly more favorably than a low content lecture, and also learned more. In addition, teacher reputation did not significantly influence TRF ratings for either the low style/low content, $t(48) = 1.37$, $p > .05$, or low style/high content condition, $t(52) < 1$, $p > .05$.

(D) EDUCATIONAL/SCIENTIFIC IMPORTANCE

The results can be summarized by examining the low and high teaching style condition separately. In the high style conditions previous teacher reputation does influence TRF ratings such that they are more consistent with expectations. Student ACH, however, does not appear to be affected by previous reputation, but is strongly influenced by lecture content. Together, these data showed that educational seduction occurred in both positive and negative reputation conditions. In the low style conditions students were influenced by lecture content for both TRF ratings and ACH performance. Previous teacher reputation, however, did not have any effect on TRF ratings or student ACH.

The data support Ware and Williams' concerns that certain teaching styles may interfere with TRF validity. Certainly the TRF ratings did not correspond to ACH performance in the high style conditions as closely as they did in the low stlye conditions. The experiment approximates field conditions with respect to teacher reputation and shows that the educational seduction phenomenon will persist in spite of negative information circulating regarding the "entertaining" teacher. Generally, the results showed that the education seduction phenomenon can be replicated in another laboratory, using different instructor, students, lecture topic, testing procedures, etc. This is an important development, apart from the experimental hypotheses, in that existing published data come only from Ware and Williams laboratory, where some problems have occurred regarding the proper conceptual analysis and appropriate statistical procedure for studying the phenomenon.

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TABLE 1: TRF and ACH cell means for the eight experimental groups

	Positive Teacher Reputation		Negative Teacher Reputation	
	Low Content	High Content	Low Content	High Content
Low Style	4.13 9.72	3.49 13.30	4.35 9.20	3.60 13.56
High Style	2.63 10.04	2.75 14.70	3.44 7.85	3.25 13.90

NOTE: TRF scores are in the upper left of each cell, and ACH scores in the lower right of each cell. A low TRF score indicated a more favorable rating
TRF range = 1-5
ACH range = 0-30